

[April 1945?]

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
Office of the Secretary  
Washington

S E C R E T

Major General William J. Donovan  
Director, Office of Strategic Services  
Washington, D. C.

My dear General Donovan:

I am replying to your memorandum of April 5 with reference to the development of a central intelligence service. The Department of Labor has a limited direct concern with your proposal. At the present time we receive information on foreign labor conditions and other matters of interest to labor through reports to the Department of State as well as from an examination of current foreign literature and occasional special missions from the Department of Labor to foreign countries. Nothing in your proposal is inconsistent with a continuation of these activities.

I agree that Intelligence with reference to foreign conditions was inadequate before the war and that better correlation is required of our expanded intelligence services than existed before the war. I would hope that the President and the Congress would decide that it is necessary for us to develop a comprehensive system of intelligence about conditions in foreign countries.

I cannot support your proposal for the creation of an Intelligence Officer reporting directly to the President. The interest of the State Department seems to me to be so extensive that it might be inappropriate to subject the State Department to any other agency for the coordination of foreign intelligence on other than narrowly defined military subjects. I should have thought that it might be possible for the President to arrange directly with the Secretaries of State, War and Navy for a division of the intelligence function which would leave no gaps but would not require continuous coordination by some officer reporting

Major General Donovan

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directly to the President. Since the problems involved are rather far removed from the field of my direct responsibility, I may be unaware of compelling reasons that lead to your proposal.

I appreciate your submitting this memorandum for my comments and criticisms.

Sincerely,

/S/ Frances Perkins

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WASHINGTON

April 20, 1945

SECRET

Major General William J. Donovan  
Director, Office of Strategic Services  
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear General Donovan:

Reference is made to your memorandum of April 6 in which you request the comments of this Department on your proposal to establish a central intelligence service.

As we understand it, what you propose is an office directly under the President for the primary purpose of coordinating the existing facilities of the various agencies of the United States Government for the collection, processing and dissemination of intelligence. We assume that you have primarily in mind intelligence on foreign conditions and developments.

Looking at the matter from the point of view of this Department, we are unable to see the necessity of creating a separate office to coordinate this work. As you know, this Department is a collector of facts in regard to agriculture both in this country and abroad. While the collection and distribution of information on the domestic situation far exceeds in point of volume the work involved in collecting information on developments abroad, we consider it of primary importance that information from both sources be integrated within the Department. It is impossible, for instance, to fully understand the cotton situation in the United States without having at hand reliable and timely information in regard to the cotton situation in foreign countries.

We do believe that it is important to avoid duplication of effort in the collection of such facts and figures both in this country and abroad. So far as the foreign information is concerned, we believe we are working along sound lines in cooperation with the Department of State and in accordance with the centralization abroad of economic activities emphasized in the President's letter of March 20, 1945, to Secretary Stettinius. Since 1939 this Department has directed the employment and assignment of agricultural specialists in the Foreign Service. We have also directed the actual reporting activities of the officers assigned to agricultural

2-Major General William J. Donovan-

work. At the same time these agricultural officers have been available in our various missions abroad to give our Ambassadors and Ministers the benefit of such information on agricultural matters as they require in the conduct of the work of their missions. In this way the Department of Agriculture secures the information it needs from individuals who are qualified to obtain it, and the Department of State benefits from having trained agricultural men attached to the staffs of our diplomatic missions. In this cooperation with the Department of State, we are also working closely with the Department of Commerce.

While some additional coordination of such intelligence work may be desirable in order to avoid duplication of effort, we believe such coordination can be and is being secured through the instrumentality of the Bureau of the Budget.

Sincerely yours,

/S/ Claude R. Wickard

Secretary

OFFICE OF THE POSTMASTER GENERAL

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

April 20, 1945

MEMORANDUM FOR MAJOR GENERAL DONOVAN:

I have given consideration to the objectives and basic principles covering the organization of an intelligence service for the postwar period outlined in your memorandum to me dated April 6, 1945, and in one to the President dated November 18, 1944, "TAB A".

The objectives appear sound. The principles, however, underlying your proposal are not stated so definitely that this Department can pass upon them in a satisfactory manner.

Numbered paragraph 3 of your memorandum to me provides for the

"maintenance of the integrity of operational intelligence and internal security functions of the several executive departments and agencies."

Page 3, TAB A, numbered paragraph 5, of which it appears the foregoing statement is the basis, reads:

"5. Subject to Paragraph 3 hereof, existing intelligence agencies within the Government shall collect, evaluate, synthesize and disseminate departmental operating intelligence, herein defined as intelligence required by such agencies in the actual performance of their functions and duties."

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The Post Office Department is responsible for the security and sanctity of the mails and cannot delegate this responsibility to any other organization. I am bringing this to your particular attention as one of the principles which must be described in more detail, for it must be made clear that any government intelligence service outside the Post Office Department must operate through the Post Office Department and recognize the absolute jurisdiction of this Department.

I shall be pleased to have my representatives discuss with you and representatives of other departments, this particular principle and the others stated by you in order that a better understanding may be had of the objectives covered in your proposal, and the means by which they may be brought about.

Postmaster General

/S/ Frank C. Walker

February 5, 1953

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OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Washington, D.C. 25

April 20, 1945

## MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF STRATEGIC SERVICES

In reply to your memorandum of April 6, with reference to a central intelligence service, on which you asked me to comment, I have the following to say:

The well coordinated system for the exchange of intelligence between Naval and Army Intelligence and the FBI, has worked well in this country and in Latin America. I should think that system should be built on rather than developing a new organization at this time. I feel strongly that no change ought to be made in the middle of the war, nor do I think it advisable to request any Congressional appropriation for this purpose. I do not believe the Congress would grant it and the intelligence service should be organized quietly and not in the manner suggested.

I approve the plan to appoint an over-all policy committee. This should consist, it would seem to me, of the services chiefly concerned, namely, State, War, Navy, Justice (FBI), and OSS.

Francis Biddle  
Attorney General

THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

April 30, 1945

My dear General Donovan:

Your solicitation of April 6 for comments on your proposal to the President for the establishment of a central intelligence service has been carefully considered, and, with the knowledge of this proposal that the Department now has, I desire to offer only general comment.

Any central intelligence service, such as proposed, would be of value to this Department only to the extent that it supplemented the intelligence already available to this Department through other endeavors, including that of the Department of the Interior itself. Such a service would be a handicap to the Department of the Interior were it to foreclose, in any fashion, the ability of the Interior Department bureaus to secure intelligence from any source, domestic or foreign, concerning subject matter on which jurisdiction is vested in this Department. Such matter is generally scientific and economic development and conservation of natural resources.

You set forth, as one of your principal purposes, that the integrity of operational intelligence and the internal security functions of the executive departments and agencies shall be maintained. This statement would have to be further implemented before I could know for sure that the establishment of the proposed central intelligence service would not foreclose existent necessary and contemplated direct operations of the Interior agencies.

In the absence of fuller information as to the type of agency contemplated and the procedures under which it might operate, I am not in a position to offer further comment.

Sincerely yours,

/S/ Harold L. Ickes

Secretary of the Interior.

Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan

Director, Office of Strategic Services.



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7 May 1945

Honorable Harold L. Ickes  
Secretary of the Interior  
Department of the Interior  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In your letter of 30 April 1945 regarding the proposal to the President for the setting up of a central intelligence service you raise the question as to whether such service would be of assistance to your department in supplementing required information or would handicap your operations by foreclosing existing sources of information.

I can assure you that you need have no concern in that regard. The success of the central agency itself would be dependent upon even more active collection than now by each department or bureau of all intelligence essential to its own operational needs. One of the principal objectives of the central agency

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would be coordination of collection of intelligence with a view to facilitating and augmenting the flow of material to each departmental intelligence agency.

It would provide a means, at present non-existent, for discussing the needs of the several departments and providing for their fulfillment. You will note in my memorandum to the President that "the creation of a central authority thus would not conflict with or limit necessary intelligence functions within the Army, Navy, Department of State or other agencies."

I regret that you could not afford the time to consider the constructive objectives of the proposal in some detail. I am sure you are aware, as are many of us, of the dangerous defects in existing mechanisms for dealing with intelligence on a national, as distinct from departmental, level and of our present inability to bring to bear upon national strategic and policy problems the immense but unorganized intelligence resources available to the United States.

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I should welcome the opportunity to discuss this matter with you personally and explain in detail the objectives of the proposals and the methods by which the proposed service would be operated.

Sincerely,

William J. Donovan  
Director

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## THE SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR

WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

May 25, 1945

My dear General Donovan:

Your letter of May 7, containing assurances that the central intelligence service that you propose is not designed to, and would not, if established, foreclose or impair existing intelligence operations of the Interior Department and its bureaus, is reassuring.

Apprehension that such a centralized intelligence service might have such effects is not without basis in our experience. The highly technical nature of the information in which this Department has an interest is such that the scientific groups in our fields frequently find little value in information and reports gathered and written by diligent and worthy people who do not have the technical training and background that is essential to the specialties of certain agencies. It is further of record that centralized efforts in the past have frequently resulted in "layering" so that the technicians are inhibited from direct access to information on the grounds that they are duplicating the efforts of others. Our professional people frequently have been denied direct access to information of value in a form which permits its utilization.

I was happy to learn from your letter that your concept of a central intelligence service is one that will not impede the operations of this Department, and I suggest that this concept be reflected in any order, act, or legislation which may result from your endeavors. I would, of course, be glad to discuss with you the proposal that you have made.

Sincerely yours,

/S/ Harold L. Ickes

Secretary of the Interior.

Maj. Gen. William J. Donovan,

Director, Office of Strategic Services.

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**SECRET** (When Filled In)

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AREA OR COUNTRY(S)	DATE	CLASS.	NO.
HQ	6 April 1945	S	
OSS Labor	to		
FCC Interior	25 May 1945		
Agriculture			
Att'y. Gen.			
Rostmaster Gen.			
Treasury			
IDENTIFICATION OF DOCUMENT (author, form, addressee, title & length)			LOCATION:
Exchange of memoranda and letters between General Donovan and various executive agencies of the government concerning the development of a central intelligence service; 15 pp.			HS/HC-31 Item 150

**ABSTRACT**

These items of correspondence give the views of various executive agencies of the government on the creation of a central intelligence service.